

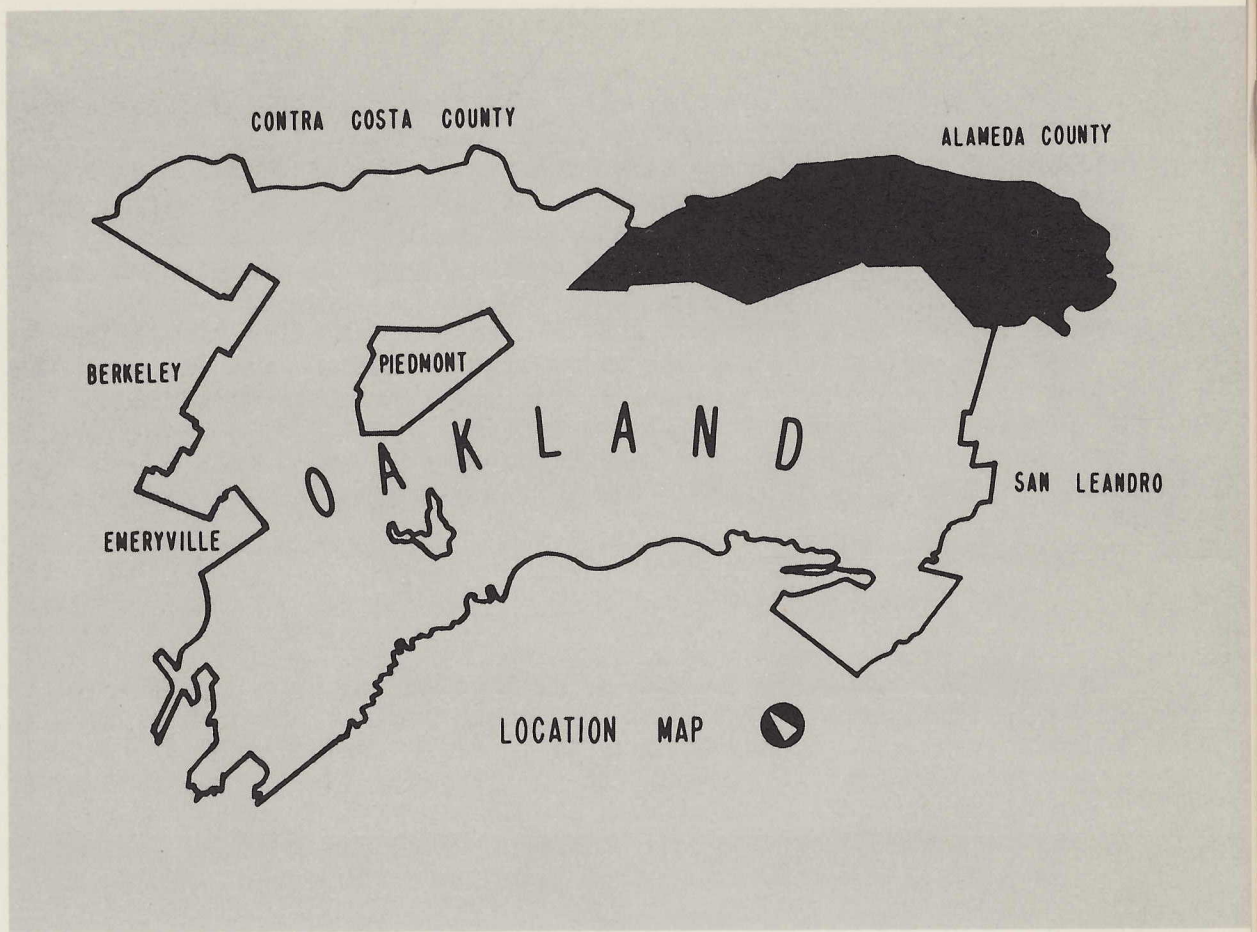
**SOUTHEAST HILL AREA PLAN**

**September 1956**



**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA**





# SOUTHEAST HILL AREA PLAN

OAKLAND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
SEPTEMBER 1956

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SOUTH-EAST AREA PLAN

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September 1956

## INTRODUCTION

The Southeast Hill Area Plan described herein and illustrated in the accompanying map is a section of the comprehensive Master Plan of Oakland. The plan represents a coordinated set of long-range goals considered to be in the best interests of the entire city of Oakland. The proposals set forth, while definite in concept, are general in nature. Thus, substantial flexibility is permitted in subsequent decisions relating to specific locations or sizes of facilities.

The plan itself will have no legal effect on property. It will, however, serve as a guide for the more definite legislative and administrative measures such as zoning, subdivision administration, and acquisition of property for public use, which do have legal effect. Because of its informative and comprehensive nature the plan should also serve as a reference and a guide to private developers and individual citizens in any action involving the purchase, sale, or development of property.

## BACKGROUND

The "Southeast Hill Area" as used in this report includes that part of Oakland lying between Mountain Boulevard and the northeastern city limits from Joaquin Miller Road to Lake Chabot. This is an area of some 5,000 acres, sloping up from Mountain Boulevard to the crest of the hills. The difference in elevation is as much as 900 feet. The land does not have an even slope as there are many canyons, knolls, valleys, and ridges. Almost one quarter of the land has a slope of over 40 percent, generally considered to be undevelopable for normal subdivisions.

In 1950 the population of the study area was 4085. In 1940 the population was 1272. This represents a change of 277 percent. Part of this increase is accounted for by the Oak Knoll Naval Hospital which was developed during World War II. Despite the large percentage increase in the population, the area remains largely undeveloped. The 1953 Land Use Survey found that 55 percent of the area was in vacant lots and open land privately owned. Twenty-two percent of the land was used for institutional purposes including recreation; streets accounted for 11.5 percent, and only 9 percent was used for residential purposes. The bulk of the institutional land is made up of four large establishments: The Oak Knoll Naval Hospital, The Knowland State Park and Arboretum, The Sequoyah Country Club, and the Oakland Municipal Golf Course. All these facilities serve an area larger than that covered by this plan.

Because of the difficult terrain the Southeast Hill Area has had very little subdivision activity compared to the unincorporated areas of Alameda and Contra Costa County. Now that suburban growth has mushroomed to the point where new home buyers are faced with excessive commuting time and distance, and subdividers are faced with rising land prices, the inherent desirability of Oakland's hill areas for homesites has come into focus. Moreover there has been a remarkable development in the use of earth-moving equipment making it possible to develop difficult terrain.

INTRODUCTION

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The plan itself will have no legal effect on property. It will, however, serve as a guide for the more definitive legislative and administrative measures such as zoning, subdivision administration, and regulation of property for public use, which do have legal effect. Because of its informative and comprehensive nature the plan should also serve as a reference and a guide to private developers and individual citizens in any action involving the purchase, sale, or development of property.

BACKGROUND

The "Southeast Hill Area" as used in this report includes that part of Oakland lying between Mountain Boulevard and the north-south city limits from Locust Street to Lake Chabot. This is an area of some 2,000 acres, sloping up from Mountain Boulevard to the crest of the hills. The difference in elevation is as much as 900 feet. The land does not have an even slope as there are many canyons, knolls, valleys, and ridges. Almost one quarter of the land has a slope of over 40 percent, generally considered to be unsuitable for normal subdivisions.

In 1950 the population of the study area was 40,000. In 1940 the population was 32,700. This represents a change of 23 percent. Part of this increase is accounted for by the Oak Knoll Naval Hospital which was developed during World War II. Despite the large percentage increase in the population, the area remains largely undeveloped. The 1953 land use survey found that 55 percent of the area was in vacant lots and open land previously owned. Twenty-two percent of the land was used for institutional purposes including recreation; streets accounted for 11.5 percent, and only 9 percent was used for residential purposes. The bulk of the institutional land is made up of four large establishments: The Oak Knoll Naval Hospital, The Knollwood State Park and Arboretum, The Berkeley Country Club, and the Oakland Municipal Golf Course. All these facilities serve an area larger than that covered by this plan.

Because of the difficult terrain the Southeast Hill Area has had very little subdivision activity compared to the unincorporated areas of Alameda and Contra Costa County. Now that suburban growth has mushroomed to the point where new home buyers are faced with excessive commuting time and distances, and subdivisions are faced with rising land prices, the inherent desirability of Oakland's Hill areas for homesites has come into focus. Moreover there has been a recent shift development in the use of earth-moving equipment making it possible to develop difficult terrain.

The resurgence of subdivision activity in Oakland's hills is coupled with a renewed interest in Oakland as a central city offering advantages not found in the suburbs, advantages such as nearness to places of employment and public service and transportation facilities, availability of police protection, fire protection and other municipal services, a diversified tax base and a stable tax rate.

## OBJECTIVES AND MAJOR PLANNING POLICY

The overall objectives of the Southeast Hill Area Plan are as follows:

1. To provide for residential expansion within the City of Oakland.
2. To combine the advantages of suburban living with central location.
3. To provide for a high standard of public service facilities to serve the residential areas.
4. To retain the natural beauty and rural character of the hills to the greatest degree compatible with full development.
5. To develop a series of neighborhoods having the physical facilities, particularly schools, playgrounds and convenient access roads, which will encourage the growth of a full community life for children and adults.

To carry out these objectives, the following policies are recommended:

1. Designation of areas of over 40 percent slope, as well as areas already developed in acre lots, as "low density" areas for development as "estates" with a minimum lot size of 25,000 square feet.
2. Designation of the remaining residential areas as "medium low density" areas for development primarily as single-family subdivisions. Limited self-contained areas located close to shopping and transportation facilities should be considered as sites for garden apartments.
3. Provision of complete urban services including utilities and streets fully improved to City specifications, as well as parks, playgrounds, community centers, libraries, and fire stations located in accordance with recognized standards.
4. Co-operation of the City of Oakland and the Oakland School District in the purchase of school sites adequate to accommodate both school functions and playground activities including active game fields for adults and youth as well as children.

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  4. Co-operation of the City of Oakland and the Oakland School District in the purchase of school sites adequate to accommodate both school functions and playground activities including active game fields for adults and youth as well as children.

5. Creation, for planning purposes, of neighborhood units of approximately 2,000 to 5,000 population, each unit to include an elementary school and play area and to be co-extensive with the school's service area.
6. Fitting new subdivisions to existing topography as far as possible, with no excessive cuts and fills, and with views, native trees and natural features of interest preserved to the greatest possible degree.
7. Development of an attractive townscape with street trees planted, cut and fill slopes landscaped, abandoned quarries restored to a safe and attractive condition, utility poles located to minimize obstruction to views, and shopping centers planned to harmonize with their residential surroundings.
8. Development of main arterials as parkways combining foot and horse trails, picnic areas and viewpoints with trafficways, with suitable landscaping and underground utilities.
9. The return of the upper portion of the Oak Knoll Hospital site to private ownership, unless a need for hospital purposes is foreseen within a reasonable period of time.

#### ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

##### Land Use

##### Residential

In the six neighborhoods proposed, there is provision for approximately 21,600 people, or 7200 dwelling units. The residential land is divided into two density categories: low density, with an assumed gross density of one dwelling unit per acre, and medium low density, with an assumed gross density of three dwelling units per acre. The extent of these density categories should not now be precisely delimited, except in the case of already developed acre-lot subdivisions, but should be determined on the basis of topography when subdivisions are in the process of design. In order to provide a broad range of residential facilities, small areas of apartment units when properly designed and related to the surrounding areas will be encouraged.

##### Commercial

In general, the standard of one shopping center per neighborhood is followed in keeping with the neighborhood unit concept. However, because of the existence or potential development of shopping centers in close proximity to the study area, the irregular configuration of some of the neighborhoods, the location of collector streets, and the consideration of freedom of choice in shopping habits, this standard is modified somewhat. Two neighborhoods have no shopping centers proposed within their boundaries, and one neighborhood has two. The location of the centers at major intersections provides for ease of access and flexibility of patronage. It is intended that all the shopping centers

6. Creation of a new residential neighborhood, of approximately 2,000 to 3,000 people, with a mix of housing types and a mix of uses, including retail and community facilities.
7. Fitting new subdivisions to existing topography as far as possible, with no excessive cuts and fills, and with some, native trees and natural features of interest preserved to the greatest possible degree.
8. Development of an attractive landscape with trees, shrubs, and lawns, and full slopes landscaped, abandoned quarries restored to a safe and attractive condition, utility poles located to minimize obstruction to views, and shopping centers planned to harmonize with their residential surroundings.
9. Development of main arteries as parkways combining foot and horse trails, bicycle areas and viewpoints with trafficways, with suitable landscaping and underground utilities.
10. The return of the upper portion of the Oak Knoll Hospital site to private ownership, unless a need for hospital purposes is foreseen within a reasonable period of time.

## ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

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indicated would serve primarily local needs. No district centers are proposed within the boundaries of the study area.\*

### Circulation

Mountain Boulevard, which forms the southern boundary of the study area, is proposed to be developed as a freeway in keeping with the policy already established by the State Highway Commission. It is further recommended that the freeway be given a parkway treatment with a planted center strip and landscaping on both sides between the freeway and private development.

For Skyline Boulevard, on the opposite side of the area, a parkway treatment is recommended to take advantage of the magnificent views and to provide for hiking and horseback riding. To eliminate traffic conflicts on the parkway, new subdivisions along Skyline Boulevard should be laid out with frontage roads or with lots backing up to Skyline Boulevard and separated therefrom by a planting screen to preserve the aesthetic value of the parkway. As proposed in the 1948 Freeways and Major Streets Section of the Master Plan, Skyline Boulevard is shown extending to Estudillo Avenue in San Leandro and to Lake Chabot Road near Castro Valley.

As recommended in the 1948 plan, Joaquin Miller Road, Redwood Road, the extension of 82nd Avenue, and Golf Links Road are planned as major streets with four moving lanes. In addition it is recommended that rights-of-way for these major streets be made wide enough to permit parkway treatment. There should be a minimum 12-foot center strip and 12 feet on either side of the road for landscaping. Poles and overhead wires should be eliminated from the rights-of-way of Skyline Boulevard, Joaquin Miller Road, and Golf Links Road by placing all utilities underground or along an easement to the rear of properties fronting on these major streets. Where topography or other circumstances permit, additional areas should be added to parkway rights-of-way to provide for picnic and outlook areas, mass plantings of native trees, etc.

In order to provide adequate access to the proposed residential area, and to provide necessary circulation within the hill area, a system of collector streets, which should be at least 60 feet wide, is recommended. It is the policy of the City of Oakland that sidewalks should be provided on all collector streets in order to permit safe pedestrian movement in the area and particularly so that children can safely walk to school. While the locations are only intended to be general, the overall layout should be followed rather closely in order that the schools and shopping centers will serve their areas efficiently.

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\*At present, district centers are located along MacArthur Boulevard in the Dimond, Laurel, and Eastmont districts. In addition to these centers, further study should be given to the possible location of a district center between Eastmont and the San Leandro city line to help serve the Southeast Hill Area. It does not appear feasible to locate it within the study area itself.

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As recommended in the 1948 plan, Joseph Miller Road, Redwood Road, the extension of Earl Avenue, and Golf Links Road are planned as major streets with four-way lanes. In addition it is recommended that rights-of-way for these major streets be made wide enough to permit parkway treatment. There should be a minimum 12-foot center strip and 12 feet on either side of the road for landscaping. Poles and overhead wires should be eliminated from the rights-of-way of Skyline Boulevard, Joseph Miller Road, and Golf Links Road by placing all utilities under ground or along an easement to the rear of properties fronting on these major streets. Where topography or other circumstances permit, additional streets should be added to parkway rights-of-way to provide for plants and outlook areas, mass plantings of native trees, etc.

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At present, district centers are located along Mountain Boulevard in the Grand, Laurel, and Eastmont districts. In addition to these centers, further study should be given to the possible location of a district center between Eastmont and the San Leandro city line to help serve the Grand Hill Area. It does not appear feasible to locate it within the study area itself.

## Public Service Facilities

An elementary school is planned near the center of each neighborhood unit, for it is the school which provides the public meeting rooms and playgrounds and is the focal point around which many common interests of families may be organized. No junior high or high school facilities are planned in the study area itself inasmuch as new facilities adequate to serve this area are being considered by the Board of Education in locations nearby.\* A playground large enough for softball and other field games should be combined with each elementary school in order to provide most economically the necessary active recreation facilities. To achieve this objective the City should join with the Board of Education in the acquisition of school sites of sufficient acreage to accommodate active play areas. The plan proposes the acquisition of property between Leona Heights Park and the Chabot Observatory to incorporate the observatory into the park. A connection should also be acquired between Leona Heights Park and the existing horse trail leading to Skyline Boulevard. A community center and park should be provided at an appropriate site in the area between Redwood Road and Keller Avenue. From the standpoint of regional recreational facilities the Southeast Hill Area is already well endowed, containing two golf courses (one public) and a state park, and bordering a large city park and the regional parks of the East Bay Regional Park District. Therefore no additional large parks are proposed.

The location of the schools at or near intersections of collector streets is determined on the basis of ease of access from all points within the neighborhood. While some consideration has been given to the buildability of the locations suggested as sites, the rugged topography and resulting low densities make access by automobile and bus the basic consideration for school locations in the hill area. With these factors in mind it should be noted that the school sites shown are practically the only ones that would be suitable. Therefore prompt action should be taken toward the purchase of these sites.

## QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The matters listed below are not covered in this report because they do not vitally affect the plan as proposed at this time. As the Southeast Hill Area builds up, however, these questions will assume greater importance and should be given careful consideration.

1. Possible annexation to Oakland of the property lying over the crest of the hills between the present city limits and the regional park property.
2. Possible early termination of all quarrying operations in the Oakland hills.
3. Possible use of watersheds for recreation.

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\*Sites currently designated for new junior high schools are located adjacent to the Joaquin Miller School at Ascot Drive and Mountain Boulevard, and in the King Estate opposite the Oak Knoll Naval Hospital.

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LLING UNITS

MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE

LAKE CHABOT

ULEYARD FREEWAY

LAKE CHABOT ROAD

E G E UNITS

W DENSITY AREA

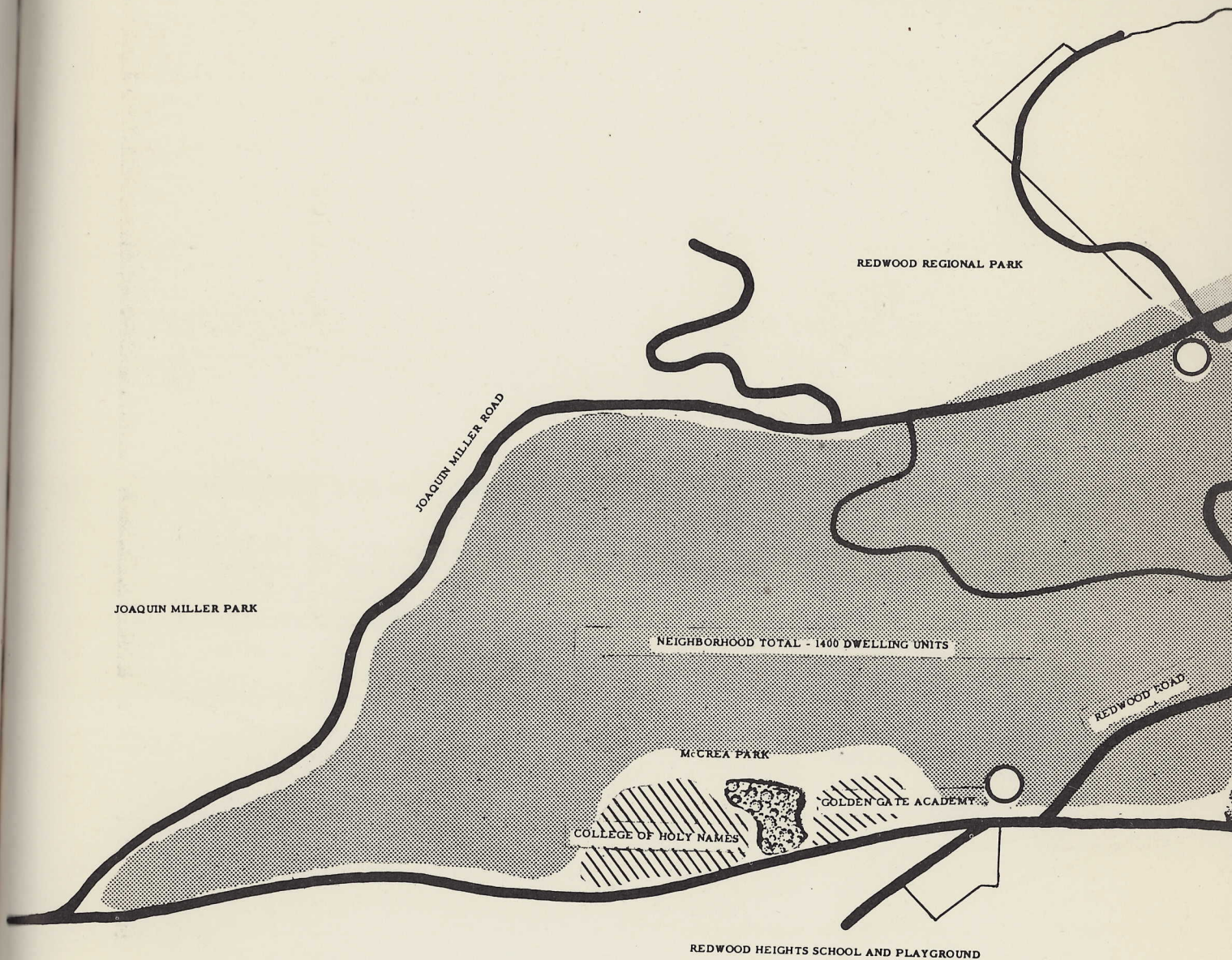
DIUM DENSITY A

RKS AND RECRE

TITUTIONS

OPPING CENTER

Parkway treatme  
Boulevard, Golf L



JOAQUIN MILLER PARK

REDWOOD REGIONAL PARK

JOAQUIN MILLER ROAD

NEIGHBORHOOD TOTAL - 1400 DWELLING UNITS

REDWOOD ROAD

MCCREA PARK

COLLEGE OF HOLY NAMES

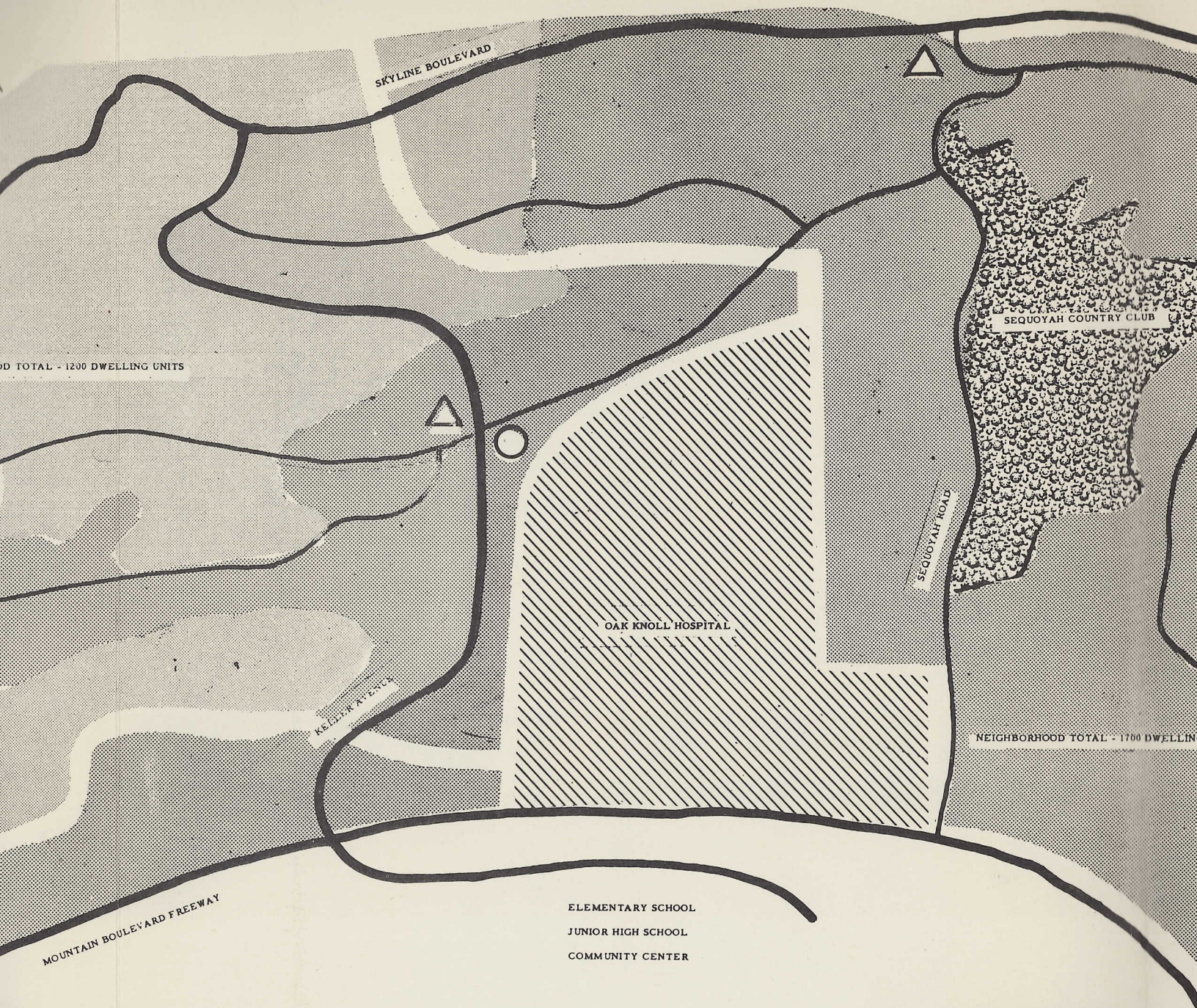
GOLDEN GATE ACADEMY

REDWOOD HEIGHTS SCHOOL AND PLAYGROUND












**L E G E N D**

	LOW DENSITY AREA
	MEDIUM DENSITY
	PARKS AND RECREATION
	INSTITUTIONS
	SHOPPING CENTER
	*Parkway (treating Boulevard, Golf)



## LEGEND

- |   |                      |   |                             |
|---|----------------------|---|-----------------------------|
|  | LOW DENSITY AREA     |  | SCHOOLS                     |
|  | MEDIUM DENSITY AREA  |  | COMMUNITY CENTER            |
|  | PARKS AND RECREATION |  | FREEWAYS AND MAJOR STREETS* |
|  | INSTITUTIONS         |  | COLLECTOR STREETS           |
|  | SHOPPING CENTERS     |   |                             |

\*Parkway treatment recommended for Joaquin Miller Road, Skyline Boulevard, Golf Links Road and Mountain Boulevard Freeway.

## SOUTHEAST HILL AREA PLAN



OAKLAND  
CALIFORNIA  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION



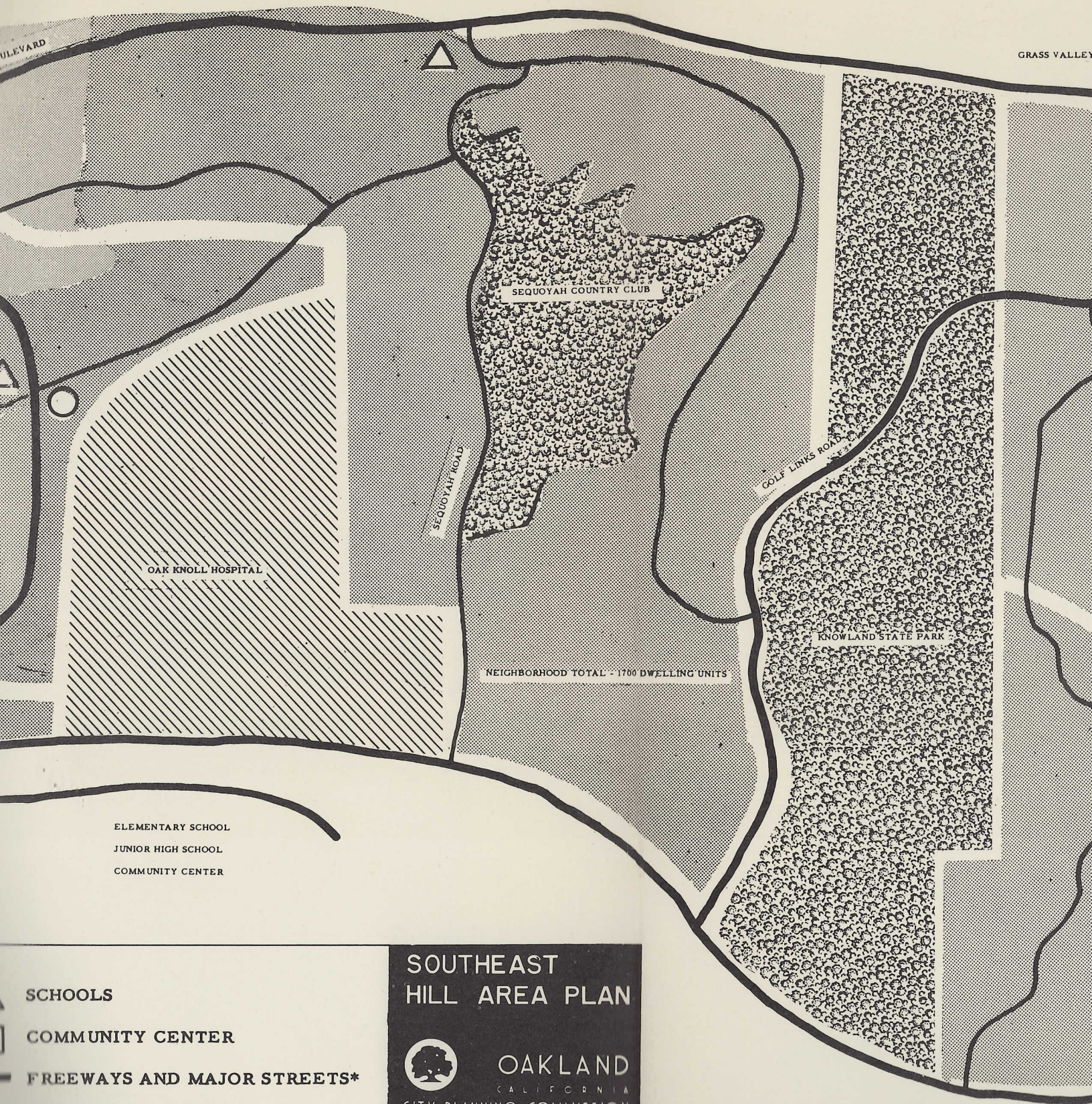
NORTH

SEPTEMBER 1956

0 500 1000  
SCALE IN FEET

GRASS VALLEY REGIONAL PARK





## SOUTHEAST HILL AREA PLAN



OAKLAND  
CALIFORNIA  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION



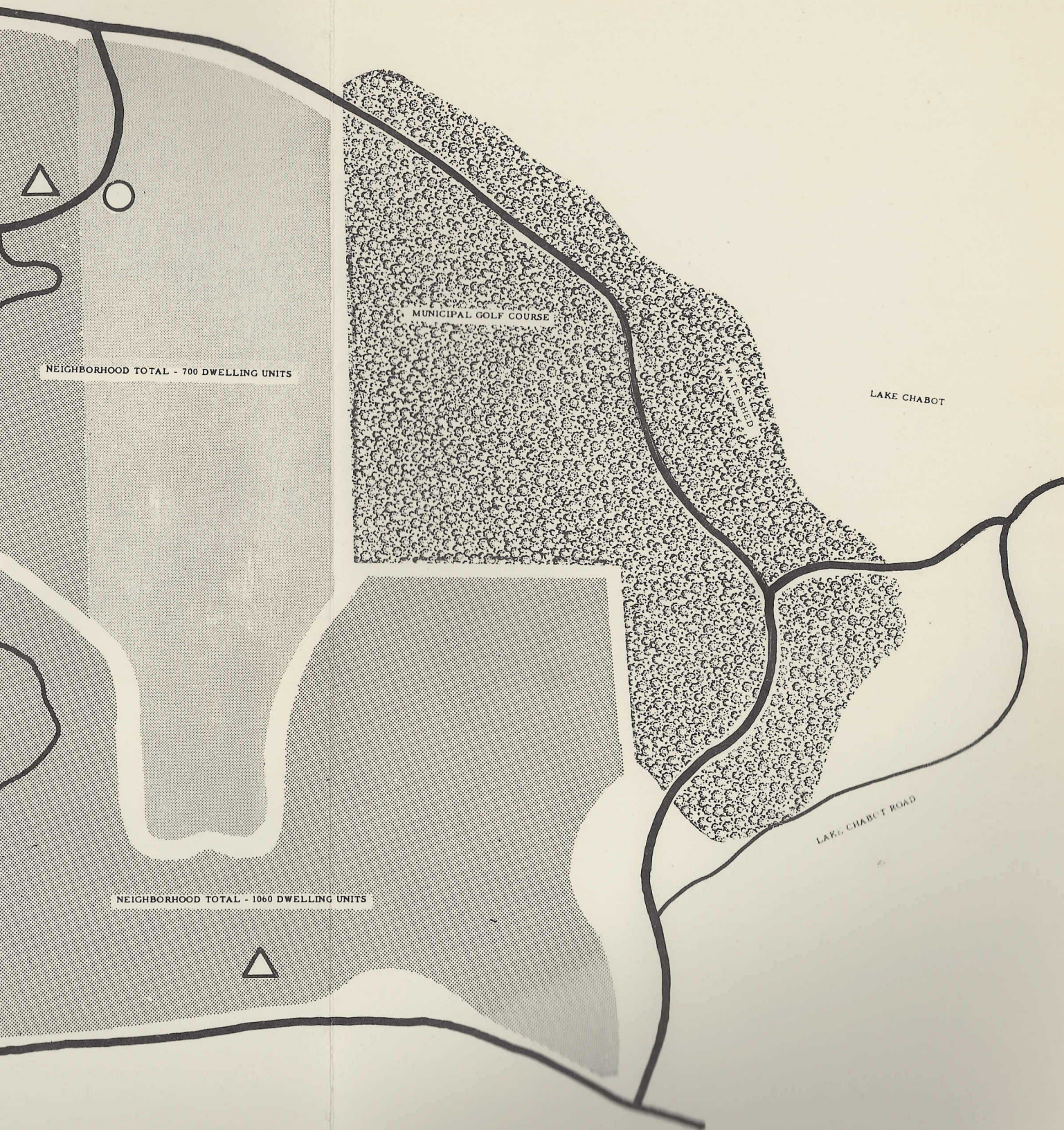
NORTH

SEPTEMBER 1956

0 500 1000  
SCALE IN FEET

ed for Joaquin Miller Road, Skyline  
Mountain Boulevard Freeway.

REGIONAL PARK





## PERSONNEL

### City Planning Commission

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John Charles Houlihan	Vice-Chairman
Albert G. Lockwood	
Norman Ogilvie	
Hugh S. Rutledge	
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This report was prepared by  
George W. Laakso, Jr.

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